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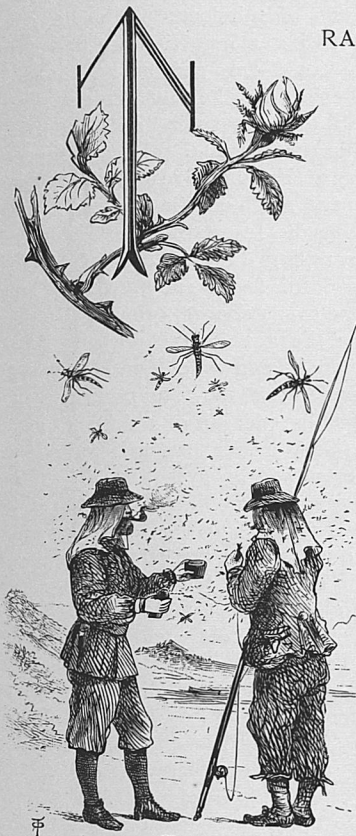
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## NORWAY.\*

By R. T. PRITCHETT, F.S.A.

## CHAPTER XV.



RAVELLERS in Norway are surprised, as they pass through the valleys, to see so few cows. This is easily explained. They visit this interesting country when these animals are away, like themselves, for a holiday; and as every dog has his day, so every Norwegian cow has her outing, and goes up to the grass pastures in the upper plateau to enjoy life until the white mantle of winter is ready to garb the upper ranges and drive the cows and "piges" down to their homesteads and winter quarters. As already described, these sæters or chalets are high up, and frequently afford the energetic nature-loving traveller and genuine hunter cover and shelter, we may almost say comfort—"cum very much grano," though. In snow work it becomes

almost luxury to have one of these to fly to in very bad weather. The tent life is the most truly enjoyable thing; still there are times when a tent may be blown down and soaked through, to say nothing of the milk supply at hand, which is meat and drink at all times, although very filling at the Norwegian price. This will account for our associating a sæter so prominently with our snow work. The one given in our wood-cut was inhabited by one Maritz, who was there by herself from July to the beginning of September or end of August, according to the early or late falls of first snows. The 20th of August generally brings the first fall of snow in this latitude (63°). During our stay we always slept in our tents, as we all feared the parasitical ticklings the sæter would inevitably afford us had we offered it the chance. All the summer through the old snow laid round the old wooden building, and seldom indeed was it that Maritz had any one to speak to, as there was no road or path of any kind. A little out-door shed, or laave, was our cooking place generally, and sometimes we squeezed in four, the dogs filling in the interstices, packed like sardines for closeness, with the oil of gladness of good fellowship. It is wonderful how invigorating this life is. What a system for a sanatorium! How right well balanced should one become with such fresh air, simple food, and exercise! with all the energy and toughness requisite for this work! Yet how kindly and obliging and caring for others one becomes! Such was the influence of our headquarters. Prosiness must be avoided however; so another day on the snow with hopes of sport, and no buck fever if we get a chance. Bad landmark that, if perchance it befall us; we will hope not: if it do we will forget it. For our line the shortest way would be across the Vand, where the trout were caught, and Danjel reported an old boat,

of that class which has no iron nails about, all wooden pegs, and yet not inviting as to its safety, for the baling-ladle of birch wood gives the idea that whoever last used it thought it would be wanted by the next comer. We determined to try it. We could all swim, and the hunters were willing. So we started. Ominous gurglings and washings to and fro in the bottom of the boat, fast, frequent and furious; the ladle was heartily plied by one strong arm, then another; still the water came. Recollections of Scottish boats in outlying spots and crannies reminded us of their Highland custom of baling the boat with a good large shoe, and if you only take a pair the power becomes doubled. Happily we arrived safely, and had soon started for a long day's work over unknown ground. The weather had cleared, and everything seemed to combine in our favour; a hearty good spirit amongst our hunters and ourselves, each fellow wishing the other good sport, and the dogs keen to a degree. They longed for a revenge, after the old gralloch, and flattered themselves that, if we were not unlucky, they would get fresh blood before nightfall. We were soon beginning to ascend steadily, and, about an hour after the start, the patriarch, working his way under some overhanging rocks, met with a surprise. An eagle, a large specimen, swept over his head and shadowed him. Rifle in its case and safely on his back, the noble bird was safe, and the patriarch delighted. Must there not be a nest? Yes, there was; rough sticks and the lightest of down feathers were all that it was made of; rude, simple and, one would think, uncomfortable, for so grand a bird. Some of the down feathers were taken as a souvenir, and are now and then brought out and floated, so light are they, in recollection of having found one of the noblest of birds at home. Midday we were out on the open snow, hardly any rock shelter for stalking, should fortune favour. The reindeer were not "at home"; we therefore stopped at a suitable rock for lunch. How we enjoyed it! Old Trophas wagged his tail with a conviction that "no

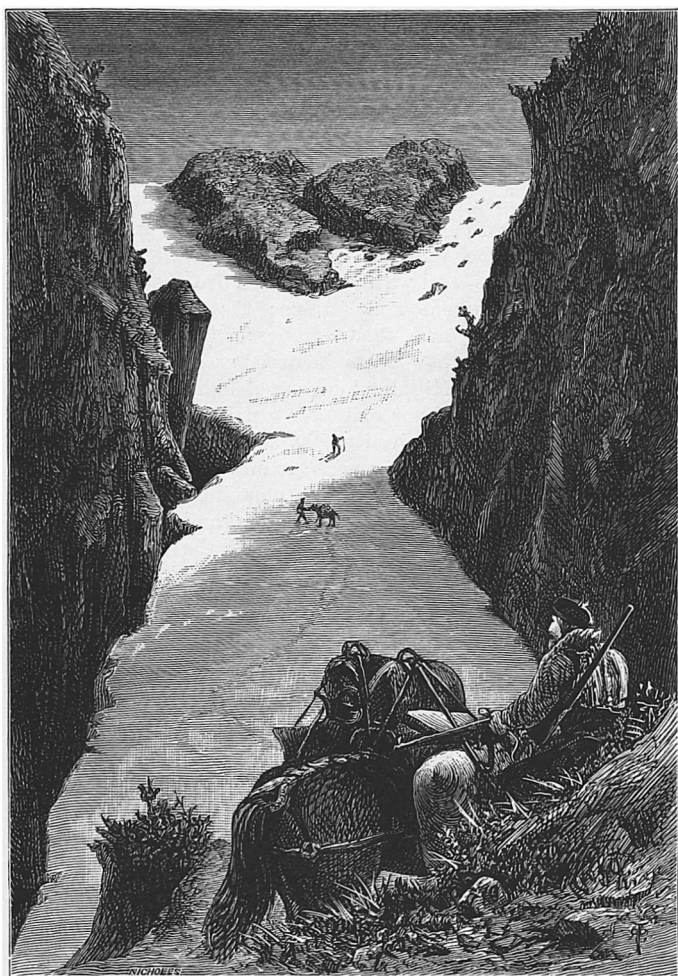


After Sport.

sport no food" would never be his fate so long as there was something left in our wallets. So we all rejoiced together, winding up with a little whisky and hearty wishes for good sport.

\* Continued from page 71.

Soon after lunch, on the snow line were seen just the tips of



*Snow Pass : Thorbau.*

some horns ; a large expanse of snow laid before us, with some small rocks half way. Could we reach them ? No ; wait for

the chance of the deer working up our way. The deer moved in the opposite direction, and our chance was gone ; still we had seen some, and that inspired fresh hope. Later in the afternoon we again saw a herd, and telescoped them for a length of time. Soon after this a second herd was seen, and it was most interesting to watch their manœuvres, which we did until they joined and moved off—of course in the opposite direction. An immense expanse of snow now laid before us, and once we could see four herds of reindeer : we could count about one hundred and forty. For a long time we had hope ; at last we agreed that if we could only get one we should be satisfied ; but that one was denied, for the four herds gradually blended and went straight off, and left us in the most perfect solitude, reindeerless. By this time we had a long distance to travel to get back to our tents. Fortunately the light fades so little that it hardly signifies ; still much care is required to judge of the best footing after leaving the snow, and the hunter leads and can go any way, even to rolling down places like a hedgehog, and sometimes sitting down for a slide. Going home becomes a kind of steeplechase over unknown ground. In these cases woe and grief must be the goal of the novice. At the highest elevation we passed an immense boulder, very like the Logan Stone, and of similar dimensions, perhaps larger. On the top of this was a much smaller one, but of a different geological formation. This gave rise to a great discussion about the glacial theory, as there was a non-believer present. What could have produced this remarkable combination but the action of glaciers passing over the surface, bearing huge masses of rock from distant parts, and, as the ice melted away, depositing the travelling masses ? These were found at an elevation of 5,000 feet or more. We also found a most interesting instance of the pink snow, very marked indeed in colour. All these varied phases of nature did much to repay us for our disappointment—"No deer." This the difficulties of the descent also made us for the time forget, as Danjel Kulingen was tearing away as hard as he could possibly go, and letting himself down, hanging on to the undergrowth of heather, sliding, rolling at one time, jumping at another. We often solaced ourselves with the idea that if we could only get him on the flat for ten miles for a finish, we could give him a spin and run him in at high speed. Whilst we had been telescoping the deer, our "Aalesund" friend was having sport ; on our return we found that he had been over to our tent to see us, and had



*A Friend in Need.*

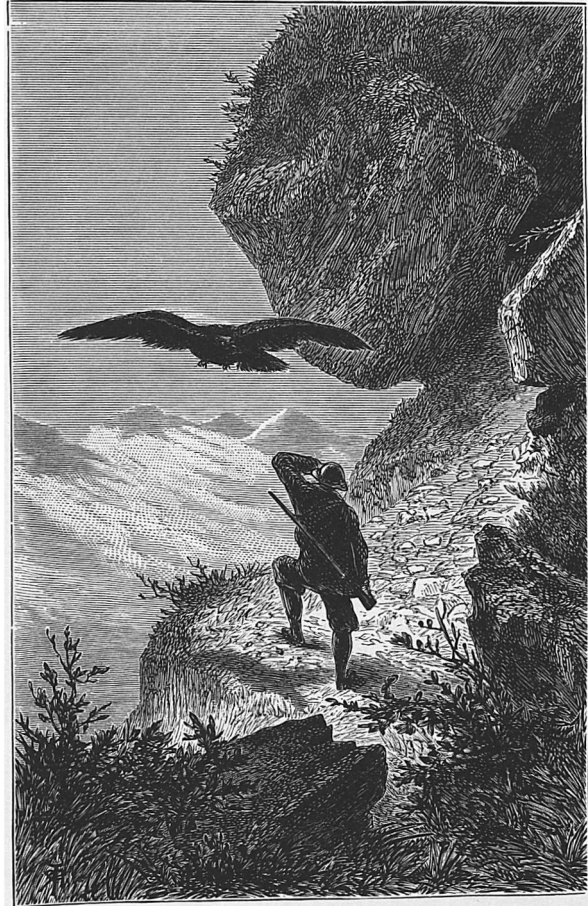
left word of "Sport, sport," and a message to try for a meet ; this unfortunately could not be arranged, or we should have

seen joy depicted on his face when he described to us where and how he killed his first reindeer.

The Norwegians believe that the horns of the reindeer are good, boiled down, for consumptive people. There is no doubt that the reindeer themselves eat, or rather gnaw them, when they are shed: this occurs in November. The males shed their horns first, and the females retain them longer. We found several horns partially gnawed through, and there must be some reason why the shed horns are not more frequently picked up when we consider the number of deer. The same idea of horn soup for consumptive cases occurs in Scotland, where the horns of red deer are also found gnawed. One would imagine that the best time for this *potage* would be when the horn is first formed, and when the velvet is on, in fact, when the horn is being renewed—and during this period it is very warm indeed—as large arteries run inside the “velvet,” or horn skin, and are engaged in depositing bone on the old stems, until the horns are complete and the velvet is fretted off, in September.

The reindeer, like ptarmigan, become white during the winter, and in their wild state are a great contrast to the sheeplike tameness of those possessed by Laplanders. The Laps have their regular call for their tame deer, who generally come at once; but if not, the proprietor has generally his lasso with him, and soon it is thrown over the animal's loins, and he is at once a prisoner. The good travelling pace of reindeer is well known—about ten miles an hour, with two hundred pounds weight behind them. In their wild state their pace was beyond computation when we were behind them. We could well say that we had been “after reindeer,” and that is all. The only way to have sport in this country is patiently to settle down to it, without fixing a time for returning; a river is not always right, and the water in condition; so with the happy hunting grounds of the reindeer hunter; a thousand things may occur to mar his success. The very wind is sometimes wrong, may chop round the very moment when we hope it will hold steadily on for an hour or two; on the other hand, it may change at some fortunate moment exactly in our favour. No, there is no royal road to such real sports as these. Real sport in all time must be the same, with its charms of uncertainty. Real sport must be worked for, and directly the uncertainty is removed its real charm is gone, and the relish dissipated. The absolute fact of shooting and killing is a mere passing second of time; it is the surroundings which afford the real pleasure—the fresh air, the

change of scene, the care required in every detail, never knowing but that the very next moment some interesting incident may



*The Eagle's Nest.*

occur which would make the day, hour, and spot a landmark; watching every breath of air, the most delicate zephyr being



*Maritz Sæter.*

registered and measured by the painstaking hunter, as he brings out tenderly some carefully-preserved pieces of the finest floss silk, or better far, some of the eagle's down feathers, already

alluded to. Again, the dogs require constant attention, and to be quite complete, a coronet of eagles' eyes, optical all-rounders, would be an assistance.